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**P**HIL - O - RUM'S  
**C**ANOE AND



**M**ADELEINE  
**V**ERCHERES

By

WILLIAM HENRY DRUMMOND

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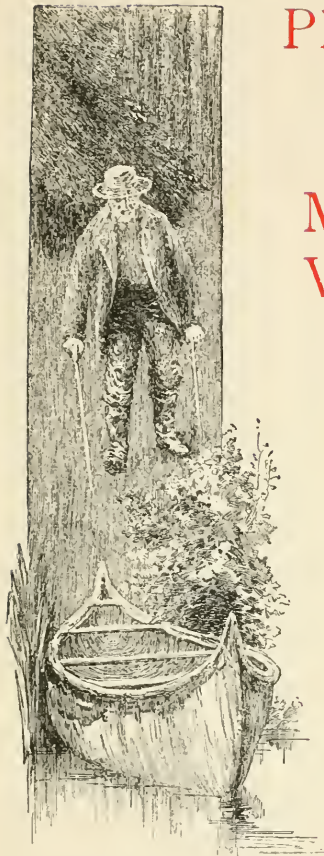




"( ) ma ole canoe, wat 's matter wit' you, an  
w'y was you be so slow?"



17  
1898



# Phil-o-rum's Canoe and Madeleine Vercheres

Two Poems by

William  
Henry  
Drummond

Author of "The  
Habitant," etc.

Illustrated by

Frederick  
Simpson  
Coburn



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON  
The Knickerbocker Press

1898

545225  
2-7-52

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R85P4

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Entered at Stationers' Hall, London

The Knickerbocker Press, New York



### PHIL-O-RUM'S CANOE.

“ O MA ole canoe, wat 's matter wit' you,  
an' w'y was you be so slow ?  
Don't I work hard enough on de paddle, an'  
still you don't seem to go—  
No win' at all on de fronte side, an' current  
she don't be strong,  
Den w'y are you lak' lazy feller, too sleepy for  
move along ?

“ I 'member de tam, w'en you jomp de sam'  
as deer wit' de wolf behin',  
An' brochet on de top de water, you scare  
heem mos' off hees min':  
But fish don't care for you now at all, only jus'  
mebbe wink de eye,  
For he know it 's easy git out de way, w'en  
you was a-passin' by '—

I 'm spikin' dis way, jus' de oder day, w'en I 'm  
out wit' de ole canoe  
Crossin' de point w'ere I see, las' fall, wan very  
beeg caribou,

## Phil-o-rum's Canoe

W'en somebody say, " Phil-o-rum, mon vieux,  
wat 's matter wit' you youse'f ? "  
An' who do you s'pose was talkin' ? W'y de  
poor ole canoe shese'f.

O yass, I 'm scare w'en I 'm sittin' dere, an'  
she 's callin' ma nam' dat way.  
" Phil-o-rum Juneau, w'y you spik so moche,  
you 're off on de head to-day:  
Can't be you forget, ole feller, you an' me  
we're not too young,  
An' if I 'm lookin' so ole lak' you, I t'ink I  
will close ma tongue.

" You should feel ashame, for you 're alway  
blame, w'en it is n't ma fault at all,  
For I 'm tryin' to do bes' I can for you on  
summer-tam, spring, an' fall.  
How offen you drown on de reever, if I 'm  
not lookin' out for you  
W'en you 're takin' too moche on de w'isky,  
some night comin' down de Soo.

" De firse tam we go on de Wessoneau, no  
feller can beat us den  
For you 're purty strong man wit' de paddle,  
but dat 's long ago, ma frien',

An' win' she can blow off de mountain, an'  
tonder an' rain may come,  
But camp see us bote on de evening—you  
know dat was true, Phil-o-rum.

“ An' who 's your horse, too, but your ole  
canoe, an' w'en you feel cole an' wet,  
Who was your house w'en I 'm upside down,  
an' onder de roof you get,  
Wit' rain ronnin' down ma back, Baptême ! till  
I 'm gettin' de rheumateez,  
An' I never say not'ing at all moi-meme, but  
let you do jus' you please ?

“ You t'ink it was right, kip me out all night  
on reever side down below,  
An' even ' bon soir ' you was never say, but  
off on de camp you go,  
Leffin' your poor ole canoe behin', lyin' dere  
on de groun',  
Watchin' de moon on de water, an' de bat  
flyin' all aroun' ?

“ Oh, dat 's lonesome t'ing hear de grey owl  
sing up on de beeg pine tree !  
An' many long night she kip me awake till sun  
on de Eas' I see,

An' den you come down on de morning for  
start on some more voyage,  
An' only t'ing decen' you do all day, is carry  
me on portage.

“ Dat 's way, Phil-o-rum, rheumateez she  
come, wit' pain ronnin' troo' ma side,  
Wan leetle hole here, 'noder beeg wan dere,  
dat not'ing can never hide,  
Don't do any good feex me up agen, no matter  
how moche you try,  
For w'en we come ole an' our work she 's  
done, bote man an' canoe mus' die.”

Wall, she talk dat way mebbe mos' de day till  
we 're passin' some beaver dam,  
An' wan de young beaver, he 's mak' hees tail  
come down on de water Flam!  
I never see de canoe so scare, she jomp nearly  
two, t'ree feet,  
I t'ink she was goin' for ronne away, an' she  
shut up de mout' toute suite.

It mak' me feel queer, de strange t'ing I hear,  
an' I 'm glad she don't spik no more,  
But soon as we fin' ourse'f arrive over dere on  
de 'noder shore

“De mos' worse current 's de las' wan too, de  
current of Dead Riviere.”









I tak' dat canoe lak' de lady, an' carry her off  
wit' me,  
For I 'm sorry de way I 'm treat her, an' she  
know more dan me, sapree!

Yass, dat 's smart canoe, an' I know it 's true,  
w'at she 's spikin' wit' me dat day,  
I 'm not de young feller I use to be, w'en work  
she was only play,  
An' I know I was comin' closer on place w'ere  
I mus' tak' care,  
W'ere de mos' worse current 's de las' wan too,  
de current of Dead Riviere.

You can only steer, an' if rock be near, wit'  
wave dashin' all aroun',  
Better mak' leetle prayer, for on Dead Riviere,  
some very smart man get drown;  
But if you be locky an' watch youse'f, mebbe  
reever won't seem so wide,  
An' firste t'ing you know you 'll ronne ashore,  
safe on de 'noder side.





## MADELEINE VERCHERES.

I 'VE told you many a tale, my child, of the  
old heroic days,  
Of Indian wars and massacre, of villages ablaze  
With savage torch, from Ville Marie to the  
Mission of Trois Rivieres;  
But never have I told you yet of Madeleine  
Vercheres.

Summer had come with its blossoms, and gaily  
the robin sang,  
And deep in the forest arches, the axe of the  
woodman rang;  
Again in the waving meadows, the sun-browned  
farmers met  
And out on the green St. Lawrence, the fisher-  
man spread his net.

And so through the pleasant season, till the  
days of October came  
When children wrought with their parents, and  
even the old and lame

"Like tigers they watch their prey."









With tottering frames and footsteps, their  
feeble labors lent  
At the gathering of the harvest le bon Dieu  
himself had sent.

For news there was none of battle, from the  
forts on the Richelieu  
To the gates of the ancient city, where the flag  
of King Louis flew ;  
All peaceful the skies hung over the seigneurie  
of Vercheres,  
Like the calm that so often cometh ere the  
hurricane rends the air.

And never a thought of danger had the Sei-  
gneur, sailing away  
To join the soldiers of Carignan, where down  
at Quebec they lay,  
But smiled on his little daughter, the maiden  
Madeleine,  
And a necklet of jewels promised her, when  
home he should come again.

And ever the days passed swiftly, and careless  
the workmen grew,  
For the months they seemed a hundred since  
the last war-bugle blew.

Ah, little they dreamt on their pillows the  
farmers of Vercheres,  
That the wolves of the southern forest had  
scented the harvest fair.

Like ravens they quickly gather, like tigers  
they watch their prey.  
Poor people! with hearts so happy, they sang  
as they toiled away!  
Till the murderous eyeballs glistened, and the  
tomahawk leaped out  
And the banks of the green St. Lawrence  
echoed the savage shout.

“ O mother of Christ, have pity! ” shrieked the  
women in despair;  
“ This is no time for praying, ” cried the young  
Madeleine Vercheres;  
“ Aux armes! aux armes! les Iroquois! quick  
to your arms and guns,  
Fight for your God and country, and the lives  
of the innocent ones. ”

And she sped like a deer of the mountain, when  
beagles press close behind,  
And the feet that would follow after must be  
swift as the prairie wind.

Alas! for the men and women and little ones  
that day,  
For the road it was long and weary, and the  
fort it was far away.

But the fawn had outstripped the hunters, and  
the palisades drew near,  
And soon from the inner gateway the war-  
bugle rang out clear,  
Gallant and clear it sounded, with never a note  
of despair—  
'T was a soldier of France's challenge, from  
the young Madeleine Vercheres!

“ And this is my little garrison, my brothers  
Louis and Paul ?  
With soldiers two, and a cripple ? may the  
Virgin pray for us all !  
But we 've powder and guns in plenty, and  
we 'll fight to the latest breath,  
And if need be, for God and country, die a  
brave soldier's death.

“ Load all the carabines quickly, and when-  
ever you sight the foe  
Fire from the upper turret and loopholes down  
below,

Keep up the fire, brave soldiers, though the  
fight may be fierce and long,  
And they 'll think our little garrison is more  
than a hundred strong."

So spake the maiden Madeleine, and she roused  
the Norman blood  
That seemed for a moment sleeping, and sent  
it like a flood  
Through every heart around her, and they  
fought the red Iroquois  
As fought in the old-time battles the soldiers  
of Carignan.

And they say the black clouds gathered, and a  
tempest swept the sky,  
And the roar of the thunder mingled with the  
forest tiger's cry,  
But still the garrison fought on, while the light-  
ning's jagged spear  
Tore a hole in the night's dark curtain, and  
showed them a foeman near.

And the sun rose up in the morning, and the  
color of blood was he,  
Gazing down from the heavens on the little  
company

"Saluted the brave young captain.





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“ Behold, my friends,” cried the maiden,  
 “ ’t is a warning lest we forget,  
 Though the night saw us do our duty, our  
 work is not finished yet.”

And six days followed each other, and feeble  
 her limbs became  
 Yet the maid never sought her pillow, and the  
 flash of the carabine’s flame  
 Illumined the powder-smoked faces, aye, even  
 when hope seemed gone,  
 And she only smiled on her comrades, and told  
 them to fight, fight on.

And she blew a blast on the bugle, and lo!  
 from the forest black.  
 Merrily, merrily ringing, an answer came peal-  
 ing back.  
 Oh, pleasant and sweet it sounded, borne on  
 the morning air,  
 For it heralded fifty soldiers, with gallant De  
 la Monnière.

And when he beheld the maiden, the soldier of  
 Carignan,  
 And looked on the little garrison that fought  
 the red Iroquois

And held their own in the battle, for six long  
weary days,  
He stood for a moment speechless, and marvelled  
at woman's ways.

Then he beckoned the men behind him, and  
steadily they advance  
And with carabines uplifted the veterans of  
France  
Saluted the brave young Captain so timidly  
standing there,  
And they fired a volley in honor of Madeleine  
Vercheres.

And this, my dear, is the story of the maiden  
Madeleine.  
God grant that we in Canada may never see  
again  
Such cruel wars and massacre, in waking or in  
dream,  
As our fathers and mothers saw, my child, in  
the days of the old régime!











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Madeleine Vercheres

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